

PRESIDENT'S TRIP TO EUROPE  
August-September 1959

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US/MC/1

APPROVED: AG 8/28

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

#6

Date : August 27, 1959  
Time : 9:35 a.m.  
Place: Palais Schaumburg

Subject: Private Meeting Between  
President Eisenhower and  
Chancellor Adenauer

Participants:

United States

President Eisenhower  
Martin J. Hillenbrand

Federal Republic of Germany

Chancellor Adenauer  
Heinz Weber (interpreter)



Copies to:

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In the private meeting lasting approximately ninety minutes between President Eisenhower and Chancellor Adenauer which took place this morning, the Chancellor began by saying that he wanted to give the President a short survey of the situation in Europe and in NATO. He noted that he had recently had a lengthy conversation with General Norstad and Secretary General Spaak at the home of the Netherlands permanent representative, Stikker, at Lake Como. This conversation was between friends and took place, as Spaak had said, as in a family circle. President had seen yesterday evening, Adenauer continued, how the Germans regarded him and the United States. The area between the airport and the bridge over the Rhine entering into Bonn was populated largely by industrial workers. These had evidenced no difference in attitude towards the President than the population of Bonn itself. The Chancellor mentioned that the policy of his Government continued to be supported by a majority of the German electorate according to recent public opinion polls. As a matter of fact, a recent public opinion poll had shown that the CDU had the support of 51 per cent of the population of the Federal Republic. Such a high level of support was

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unique in a period prior to elections. The Chancellor predicted that, unless something quite unexpected happened, the CDU would win the Bundestag elections in 1961. This would mean a continuation of the policy of the present Government.

The Chancellor went on, saying that he would like to make a few remarks about the personality of Khrushchev. He assumed that he could talk as frankly on this subject to the President as he had been able to John Foster Dulles. This would also apply to what he later would have to say about General de Gaulle. In the autumn of 1955, the Chancellor continued, he had spent six days (mornings, afternoons, and evenings) in Moscow speaking to the Soviet leaders. At that time, of course, Bulganin was the head of the Soviet Government, but he had also had ample opportunity to observe Khrushchev. One of the main points made by Khrushchev to Adenauer was that the Germans should help him. Khrushchev expressed fear of the United States and of Communist China, but did not mention any other European countries. As to Red China, he alluded to the rapid rate of population growth, pointing out that the already huge population of 600 million was increasing each year by some 12 million. A good illustration of Khrushchev's character, according to the Chancellor, was provided by the very long letter which he had received a few days ago from the Soviet leader. He (Adenauer) had the impression that this had not been drafted in the Foreign Ministry but largely by Khrushchev himself. The letter stated that, as a realist, Adenauer should recognize the facts of life. The point was emphasized that while, in the past, Russian-German relations had had their good periods and their bad periods, the good periods were obviously of great advantage to both countries. Economic cooperation between the Federal Republic and the Soviet Union could only be beneficial to both. In his letter Khrushchev went on to say that ideological differences should play no part between Adenauer and him and that the remains of the last war should be removed and the way opened to harmonious relations between the Federal Republic and the Soviet Union. He boasted that the Soviet Union was stronger than the United States and all its Allies counted together. However, although the world was no longer at a point where the Soviets could be threatened, he (Khrushchev) and the Chancellor had witnessed too much horror in their time to want to intimidate each other.

Adenauer noted that Khrushchev's letter did contain a very strong personal and human touch. He had not yet answered it but had himself prepared a draft of a possible reply. As the President knew, it had been agreed between the Soviet Ambassador in Bonn and the German Foreign Ministry that the exchange of correspondence would only be released by common

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agreement. Before sending his reply, Adenauer first wanted to have his discussion with the President. His reply was likewise couched in a reasonable and moderate tone. It made the main point that the tensions in the world are not caused by the remains of the last war, as claimed by Khrushchev, but by competition in armaments. If controlled general disarmament could be achieved, this would be a decisive factor. The atmosphere thereupon would be relaxed, and it would be possible to settle other issues. Adenauer said that he would make the point that he who has the strongest weapons is not necessarily the greatest statesman. The greatest statesman will be the one who liberates the world from the pressure of mounting terror and armaments.

The President said that this was the line which he expected to take with Khrushchev. If he wanted to be the great man of his time, not just another Lenin or Stalin, he should relieve the world of these tensions, thus contributing toward permanent progress. This would be the main theme of what he would say to Khrushchev, the President repeated, with, of course, all sorts of different variations.

Adenauer continued that, in his draft reply, he also made the point that who is strongest in the world is not of interest to him, because if there were war, the victor would not enjoy the fruits of his victory. The President commented that there would be no victor in a future war.

The Chancellor noted that it was typical of Khrushchev that, despite the prior agreement on the subject, he had now published his letter. The President said he would merely suggest to the Chancellor that, in his reply, he note this fact before going on to questions of substance. The Chancellor said that, when Ambassador Smirnov came in yesterday to tell the Foreign Office that the letter of Khrushchev would be published after all, he was obviously very embarrassed when it was pointed out to him that this was in violation of the agreement that the exchange would not be released without mutual consent. This unreliability was typical of Khrushchev, the Chancellor pointed out, together with his deep-seated conviction that Communism will win the world under Soviet leadership.

The President commented that, when someone is deceitful and breaks his word to achieve some specific gain thereby, we can understand his motivation if he is a Communist. But what did Khrushchev gain by conduct of this kind? Adenauer said that the letter from Khrushchev was very cleverly drafted. Its release was obviously intended to influence German public opinion during the visit of the President. In response to the President's query, the Chancellor said that, as far as he

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know, the communications of Khrushchev to Macmillan and de Gaulle had not so far been published. As a matter of fact, the letter to de Gaulle was in a different form. It seemed to be essentially a memorandum. As to the nature of the communication to Macmillan, the Chancellor was not aware of its contents but knew only that it had been received.

To go on now to the subject of NATO, the Chancellor continued, he wanted to mention that Secretary General Spaak was most deeply concerned about the future of the organization. The threat from Communist infiltration was very great in Italy and in France. Parenthetically, the Chancellor noted that last Saturday M. Segni, an old friend, had called on him at Lake Como. He seemed very much concerned and worried about the future, and spoke quite freely with respect to the situation in Italy and in his own party. On one side stood Segni and his supporters among the Christian Democrats; on the other side were Fanfani and Gronchi.

Therefore, the Chancellor concluded, we must do all we can to hold the Segni government, which tends more to the right, to remain in office. The Chancellor said that he had to tell the President frankly that Segni was concerned regarding the effect which newsreel showings covering the Khrushchev visit to the United States might have in Italy. If the Italian public were to see pictures of enthusiastic receptions being given to the Soviet leader, Segni would find it difficult to explain his own position to the Italian public. The Chancellor said he wanted to repeat that we should therefore do all we could to support this government. It was going to be helpful that the President would see Segni and Pella in Paris.

As to France, the Chancellor continued, Spaak believed that the President's forthcoming conversations with de Gaulle will be of critical importance to the future of NATO. In a letter to him which the Chancellor received the day before yesterday, Spaak expressed the fear that, on the French side inadequate preparations had been made for the talks with the President. The Chancellor noted that the President was of course familiar with the concern caused by lack of governmental stability in France up to May of 1958. The situation at that time, according the Adenauer's old friend, Pflimlin, had led to a situation where the alternative was either civil war or de Gaulle. Pflimlin was not a Gaullist, but since he was against war, he had had to be for de Gaulle. During the summer of 1958 some friends of de Gaulle had come to Adenauer and asked him to visit the General in Paris. Adenauer took the position that, while Macmillan or Secretary Dulles could go to Paris,

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it did not seem appropriate for him to do so as the representative of a vanquished nation. De Gaulle subsequently asked whether the Chancellor could not visit him at his private residence at Colombey-les-Deux-Eglises. The Chancellor accordingly agreed to make such a visit on his way back from his vacation last fall. The Chancellor noted that he had gone there with a heavy heart. He had never seen de Gaulle before but shared the general idea of him as an extremely difficult person, and was deeply concerned. De Gaulle had sent all of his advisers away, including the French Foreign Minister, and had engaged in a private talk with the Chancellor lasting from four to five hours. This conversation, the Chancellor went on, caused him great surprise. He had told de Gaulle frankly that he had had quite a different idea of the man. De Gaulle had impressed him as a wise and far-seeing person, not at all an extreme nationalist. De Gaulle had actually said that his most difficult task was to prevent French nationalism from becoming too extreme. He had also explained to the Chancellor why, after World War II, he had taken the position vis-a-vis the Soviets which he had, and why this position was now changed. At that time he had feared German revanchism, but he now recognized that the new Germany was different, a neighbor with many common interests with France making for good mutual relations between the two countries. ✓

Adenauer noted that de Gaulle had lived twelve years in lonely isolation at Colombey-les-Deux-Eglises. This was a lonely, poor neighborhood. In Adenauer's opinion, these twelve years had completely changed the man. To sum up, the Chancellor added, de Gaulle was a man of integrity; he will not lie. What he now does in a nationalistic sense, he does only to strengthen France. The Chancellor said he wanted to point out that he had never discussed with de Gaulle either the Eisenhower visit, the French position in NATO, or for that matter the United States.

The Chancellor said that, based on his personal impressions, he would judge that de Gaulle would probably refer to his letter of September, 1958, and proceed from this to the various steps which he believed should be taken in NATO. The Chancellor would not go into technical details of this subject. General Norstad could provide these. The essential point for de Gaulle was that France appear as a power equal to the United Kingdom and the United States. The Chancellor noted parenthetically that General Norstad had told him that the institutional arrangements which had grown up during the war, between the United Kingdom and the United States, had gradually diminished in the post-war period. The President commented that they had completely disappeared. The Chancellor

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said that this depended on what one meant by "completely." The President said that if we see a problem coming up in which we have a common interest with the United Kingdom, for example, in Iran, Iraq, or Egypt, we get our staffs together on an ad hoc basis and tell them to get busy.

..... He would have no objection to letting de Gaulle participate in this sort of exercise, but these arrangements between us and the United Kingdom were completely ad hoc. We do, as an exception, have standing arrangements with Canada with respect to common air defense. The President continued that he was one of those who had wanted to keep the combined Chief of Staff arrangements with the British going after the end of World War II, even if it were necessary to do this secretly. However, the political decision (at this time the President was serving as a General) was to bring them to an end.

What troubles de Gaulle very much at the present time, the Chancellor went on, is the forthcoming vote in the United Nations on Algeria. While he had received nothing on the subject directly from the French government or from de Gaulle, the Chancellor had received a letter from a common friend of Pinay with whom he was very close. The Chancellor believed that the views in this letter were expressed with the consent of de Gaulle. As the President knew, Pinay was not a Gaullist. He was an intelligent man whose judgment the Chancellor respected. He was in conflict with Debre, than whom he had a much more reasonable position and over whom he had recently won a considerable victory. Pinay was in the position of a free man who had been asked and had not himself asked to participate in the Cabinet. In this letter from Pinay's friend received some two months ago, the opinion had been expressed that, if the vote in the United Nations on Algeria showed a two-thirds majority against France, then a great danger would exist that there would be a mutiny of the French army in Algeria against de Gaulle. This would mean civil war in France--a terrible prospect for Europe and for the United States. He had heard, the Chancellor commented, that the French army in Algeria is a completely different army than the old French army. It had served in Indo-China and subsequently in Algeria for a long time and was a strongly united body. The United Nations vote therefore would be of critical importance for France, Europe, and NATO.

After his original meeting with de Gaulle, the Chancellor continued, he had had two subsequent meetings with the General, one at Bad Kreuznach, and then in Marly this spring. De Gaulle had always impressed him as open-minded and not at all in blinkers. If, as certain American newspapers were

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now demanding, General de Gaulle should state his Algerian policy in detail, this would lead to an impossible situation in the light of the actual circumstances. His ability to carry out a program would depend in part on the United Nations vote. Moreover, as Spaak had pointed out, de Gaulle could not now make a detailed offer to the Algerians, since they would immediately bank this and go on from there. The conversation between the President and de Gaulle will therefore be of the greatest significance, the Chancellor once again stressed. Much will depend on the atmosphere in which these talks are conducted.

The President said that in World War II de Gaulle had generally been considered by the Allies as a very difficult person. The attitude of both President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill had become so pronounced on this, that he (General Eisenhower) had been given the job of getting along with General de Gaulle in view of the importance of obtaining his cooperation in implementing Allied plans. In this endeavor the President had established friendly relations, had gotten along with de Gaulle, and liked him. He believed that the forthcoming conversations would continue in the same atmosphere. He had talked with de Gaulle after the war while at SHAPE, and had had a serious, open, and satisfactory discussion with him at that time. The Chancellor interjected that he was pleased to hear this. The President said that he would like to have the Secretary of State present in discussing the United Nations resolution question, since his representatives had to deal with the specific problem. However, he wanted to point out that there were two relevant principles which are approved by the entire American people: (a) We do not settle any quarrels by force but believe in negotiations and peaceful means of settlement; (b) We are very anti-colonialist. These principles make it very difficult to write a blank check for de Gaulle in Algeria. We did not know whether he intended to put down the rebellion by force. After all, there were some 600,000 French troops there. Despite French protests that Algeria was an internal problem, the world thought of it as essentially a colonial problem. Last year in the United Nations the French walked out and asked us to carry the burden of defending their position. We, in effect, said that France would not defend itself. We were not in a position to lead. Hence we abstained in the vote. He understood, the President continued, that de Gaulle could not give all the details of his plans in advance. However, he must set forth the principle at the heart of his plans, which would make it possible to obtain the support of other countries as long as France took the lead in defending itself in the United Nations on a basis which could not be interpreted essentially as a case of colonial domination. The Chancellor

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agreed it would be a good idea to discuss this problem in the presence of the Secretary of State but said that he wanted to add two points. The Algerian problem is a European problem. If Algeria comes under Communist domination--and the rebels now obtain a good part of their weapons from Communist sources--then the Communists would obtain a foothold in the Mediterranean area. This would have a serious effect. Italy and France would go Communist. After all, the Communist Party in Italy under Togliatti was the strongest in Europe. It was the instrumentality through which instructions were given to the Communists in North Africa. If the Mediterranean area goes Communist, that will mean the end of Europe. Togliatti was a university professor, the Chancellor further commented, a gifted and clever politician and an exceedingly dangerous one. The President said that no one in the world had given more thought than he to the evils of Communism. Since the early days of the last war, the President had become convinced that Communism was going to be the major enemy. However, here the problem is one of supporting too strongly a country with a colonial history against the Arab world. The victory might be won for the moment in Algeria but in the long run the entire Arab world would be lost. Under such circumstances the Mediterranean area would likewise be lost. This, as the Chancellor had observed, could not be tolerated.

The Chancellor said he agreed that the Arab world could not be lost. This had been the basis of his policy ever since Nasser had come into power. He had told Mr. Eugene Black of the World Bank that he must help the Egyptians to improve living conditions in their country, especially with the Aswan Dam project. However, the Chancellor was confident that the Arab world would not be lost if we treated it properly and quoted the German proverb that one's shirt is nearer to one than an overcoat. If de Gaulle falls, the loss would be irreparable- he was the only barrier to French civil war. The Chancellor wanted good relations with France because she was a neighbor but also because of the strategic importance of the country.

The President stated that he agreed, but that he was confident that de Gaulle had become a sufficiently experienced political leader so that he would propose a plan which the civilized world could accept wholeheartedly. An impossible situation would be created, however, if he said nothing specific but merely demanded unqualified support on Algeria.

The Chancellor noted that the word "support" had many meanings. The Federal Republic also did not propose to "support" the French forces in Algeria.



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The President said this was the case, but he was speaking specifically about the United Nations problem. He was confident that de Gaulle would propose a good plan and would instruct his United Nations delegation to fight for France's own interests.

The Chancellor observed that de Gaulle's greatest enemies were the French settlers in Algeria. The President agreed but added that this also applied to much of the army. All he could say was that we were going to support the French if they came up with a plan we could support, as Mr. Dillon had told them. The President wanted to do nothing which would wreck NATO. This was the important thing which should not be forgotten. Adenauer said that he fully subscribed to this.

The Chancellor said he wanted to add a word about the British. He would say nothing about Macmillan, who is a fine man, but the British papers, and what was called public opinion as represented by these papers, were a problem. There was perhaps only one substantive difference between the British Prime Minister and the Chancellor and that was on disengagement. In the Chancellor's view, proposals for a controlled demilitarized zone which did not stretch from the Urals to the Atlantic but included only Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Germany were a military absurdity, destructive of NATO and discriminatory to Germany. The Chancellor could never agree to such an arrangement. This position was also shared by General Norstad from the military point of view as well as by military leaders of the Federal Republic. Although he was not an expert, the Chancellor said that to him as a layman such proposals made no sense in the light of modern weapons. As a matter of fact, the Chancellor pointed out, General Norstad had indicated that British Foreign Minister Selwyn Lloyd agreed with the Chancellor's view. The Chancellor hoped to see Macmillan soon and would have frank talks with him on this problem as well as that of the free trade zone. European integration must move forward and is the only hope for Europe, the Chancellor continued. The countries of Europe are too small and weak by themselves to withstand Soviet influence. They must integrate to be strong. This was more a political than an economic problem. The Chancellor said he had made these points in a previous conversation with Secretary of State Herter, pointing out the dangers which a failure to integrate in Europe would involve. Among these would be possible Soviet domination of the Federal Republic. If such domination were to occur, the Soviets would be in a strong position to wage economic warfare against the United States. The Chancellor noted that he had had a long talk recently with Professor Kissinger of Harvard

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University who agreed fully with him regarding the economic danger from the Soviets. The President commented that he was fully in accord.

In closing, the Chancellor said he would like to note that in a recent talk with him, Pinay had said that de Gaulle had now become a good European but not Debre. However, the latter would do what he was told to do. The President commented that Pinay was one of the best men in France.

At this point, the President and the Chancellor terminated their private discussion and proceeded to a nearby room to resume their conversations in the presence of their principal advisers.

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